

Doctrine of Non-Repentance

1. There is a frightening phrase used in the Bible, “*repented not.*”
2. The phrase is frightening because God has called upon all men everywhere to repent of their sins. *Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*
3. That most people in any given generation do not repent of their sins and turn back to God is the testimony of time and evidence by the increased population of hell. Isaiah the prophet lamented, “*Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. 14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it*” (*Isa. 5:13-14*).
4. Sometimes it is believed that if God would give to His people good ministers to teach them the right way then it would be easier to repent. But this is not true, for the gospel of repentance can be rejected, as it was during the days of John the Baptist. After his death it was said, *Matthew 21:32, “For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: ...when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.”*
5. The thought comes that if God were physically present it would be easier to do right and repent of sins. But that is not true for the heart of man is desperately wicked. When the Lord Jesus was on earth men did not repent though the Messiah was in the midst of men. As a result we read in *Matthew 11:20 “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.”*
6. During AD 66 and AD 70 great judgments fell upon the nation of Israel in particular, and Rome in general, and yet most men did not repent. Four times in the Revelation we read of the severity of God and the non-repentance of men.
 - *Revelation 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.*
 - *Revelation 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:*
 - *Revelation 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*
 - *Revelation 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

7. Because men do not repent of the evil they do, God does not repent of the severity of his judgment.
 - *Jeremiah 20:16 And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide;*
 - *Zechariah 8:14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:*
8. The time will come when those who do not repent will find that they cannot repent.
 - *Revelation 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*
9. In light of these gospel truths the Lord must give individuals the gift of repentance for the ability to turn from sin to righteousness can only take place in the context of sovereign grace. This truth is set forth in Acts 11:18. We read how the early disciples came to understand, *“Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”*
10. Lest no one despair, the gospel message is that the Lord does not move quickly to destroy, but to show goodness, in order to lead the heart to repentance and thus change. In specific language we are reminded that the goodness of God is designed to lead us to repentance. *Romans 2:4 “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”*
11. Lest anyone delay repenting, the fearful warning goes forth, from Hebrews 3:7-12, *“Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”*
12. What shall we repent of? The heart knows. God the Holy Spirit comes to remind us of those things which are not pleasing to Him. If the heart is honest it knows what grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit for there is an oppressive sadness in the soul.
 - Adam and Eve needed to repent of their sin of disobedience.
 - Abraham needed to repent of his sin of lying to Abimelech.
 - Jacob needed to repent of his duplicity with his mother against Isaac.
 - Samson needed to repent of his drunkenness and being with prostitutes.

- Sarah needed to repent of her lack of faith and her scheming ways to get a son apart from the known will of God.
- Queen Esther needed to repent of the way she gave herself to a polygamous sensual king for a one-night stand.
- Mordecai needed to repent of the coldness of heart that would lead him to use his niece for personal and political advantage.
- Moses needed to repent of murder and pride and then of uncontrollable anger.
- Peter needed to repent of not wanting the plan of God to progress.
- Ananias and Sapphira needed to repent of their covetousness and greed.
- The man in 1 Corinthians needed to repent of his incest.

13. What is it that you need to repent of? You already know.

14. Why do men not repent?

- There is a will to power. *Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*
- There is a principle of pleasure. *Hebrews 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

15. What attraction does sin hold for the soul?

- Sin has a physical attraction. There is a sense of beauty. *Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*
- Sin has an emotional attraction. There is the thrill of danger or “*living on the edge.*”
- Sin has a mystical attraction associated with the demonic. Three times in Revelation (13:5, 7 and 16:8) power is spoken of being given to evil. There is a mystical side to madness. Who can explain the popularity of a Saddam Hussein, an Adolph Hitler or a Joseph Stalin?

- Many sins have a sensual attraction. Without sex the human race would cease to exist. Because the gift of sex can be perverted in such a way it will bring an end to procreation through such sins as pornography, homosexuality and lesbianism, God has put within the heart of individuals a passion that transcends time and place.

The world, flesh and devil combine to find ways to exploit sensuality beyond the natural purpose of marital pleasure and procreation so that sex sells. It sells movies, tooth paste, chewing gum, household products such as Mr. Clean and a thousand other items.

16. What power does sin have over the soul? The answer is this. Sin forms invisible chains through habits.

“Sow a thought, reap an act.
Sow an act reap a habit.
Sow a habit reap a character.
Sow a character reap a destiny. “

17. Once habits are established, they are hard to change. Ask any person with an addiction to sex, food, spending, gambling, or anger. Many a person has felt a sense of “helplessness” and being “out of control.” It is as if two people live in one body. There is a good person that wants to do right. There is an evil person that loves darkness rather than light. Sin whistles and the soul willingly and greedily follows. *“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Peter 2:22).*
18. The sensitive soul cries out to God for the gift of repentance pleading, *“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24).*
19. If God shows mercy the answer is whispered, *“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 7:25).*
20. May the church always be found faithful, pleading with God to give the gift of repentance lest souls perish to increase the population of hell.
21. Unfortunately, it is not easy to repent. Generally speaking, consider some things that will not lead to repentance.
- Fear of being caught. Individuals know how to cover their behavior. The older they grow the more sophisticated they can be in the cover up of wrong behavior.
 - The example of others. Negative examples might give individuals a moment of reflection but rarely does a negative example stop someone else from doing the same thing.
 - Past promises and vows exchanged. In the moment of sin the soul will do what it thinks is in its best interest at the moment and will justify the unimaginable. The worldly philosophy of victimization encourages evil.

- Memorizing the Bible. The Devil knows the Bible. He can even quote it. But it does not lead him to repentance. The Pharisees memorized large passages of Scripture but they were evil to the core.
- Religious activities such as going to church, being baptized, giving money does not stop the soul from sinning. It is easy enough for anyone to lead a double life. Each Sunday thieves and murderers, rapists and adulterers, homosexuals and those with violent tempers fill the pews—if the truth were told.
- Pastoral and or professional counseling. With all of the self-help books on the market today and with all of the mental health options, no one should have a problem today. But the techniques and suggestions do not produce sorrow for sin or lasting change.

22. Individuals will want to repent when the following occurs.

- When the burden of sin becomes too great to bear there will be a longing to repent, to change, and to be different. The yoke of sin is heavy.
 - It is oppressive to the soul so that joy is pressed out of life.
 - It is oppressive to the spirit so that despair sets in and dark thoughts of suicide become a violable alternative.
 - It is oppressive to the body which reacts to the ravages of wrong choices and sinful actions. Those who drink too much damage their liver. Drug addicts damage their mind. Smokers harm their lungs. Those who eat to excess damage their hearts.
- When the conscience is allowed by God to feel the intensity of a justified guilt there will be a desire to repent, to change, and to be different. The reason why individuals feel guilty even though most have had no religious upbringing, is because this is a moral universe. God has written His law into the conscience so that no one is without excuse. According to Romans 1 guilt can be denied or suppressed. But if God allows the conscience to have its natural way the sense of guilt that is felt leads to repentance. Be careful of trying to ease the conscience of someone. God may be at work in the soul.
- When God in His sovereign grace moves upon the heart and draws the soul to the Cross, there will be a desire to repent. It is this divine undertaking that must be sought and pleaded for. The only alternative is certain damnation. Who knows if God will not show mercy and come and visit those who sit in darkness, personal despair and moral bankruptcy.